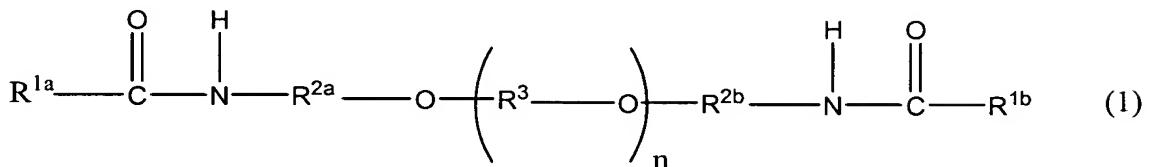


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (original): A composition for external application, which comprises a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



(wherein, R^{1a} and R^{1b} are the same or different and each represents a C₁₋₂₃ hydrocarbon group, R^{2a} and R^{2b} are the same or different and each represents a divalent C₁₋₆ hydrocarbon group, R³s are the same or different and each represents a divalent C₂₋₆ hydrocarbon group and n stands for 1 to 100).

Claims 2-6 (canceled):

Claim 7 (original): A method for reinforcing the water retaining ability of the horny layer, which comprises applying, to the skin, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 8 (original): A method for reinforcing skin barrier functions, which comprises applying, to the skin, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 9 (original): A method for remedying excessive hair dryness or improving touch feel of the hair, which comprises applying, to the hair, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 10 (original): Use of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1 for the preparation of a composition for external application.

Claim 11 (original): Use according to claim 10, wherein the composition for external application serves as cosmetics.

Claims 12-14 (Canceled):